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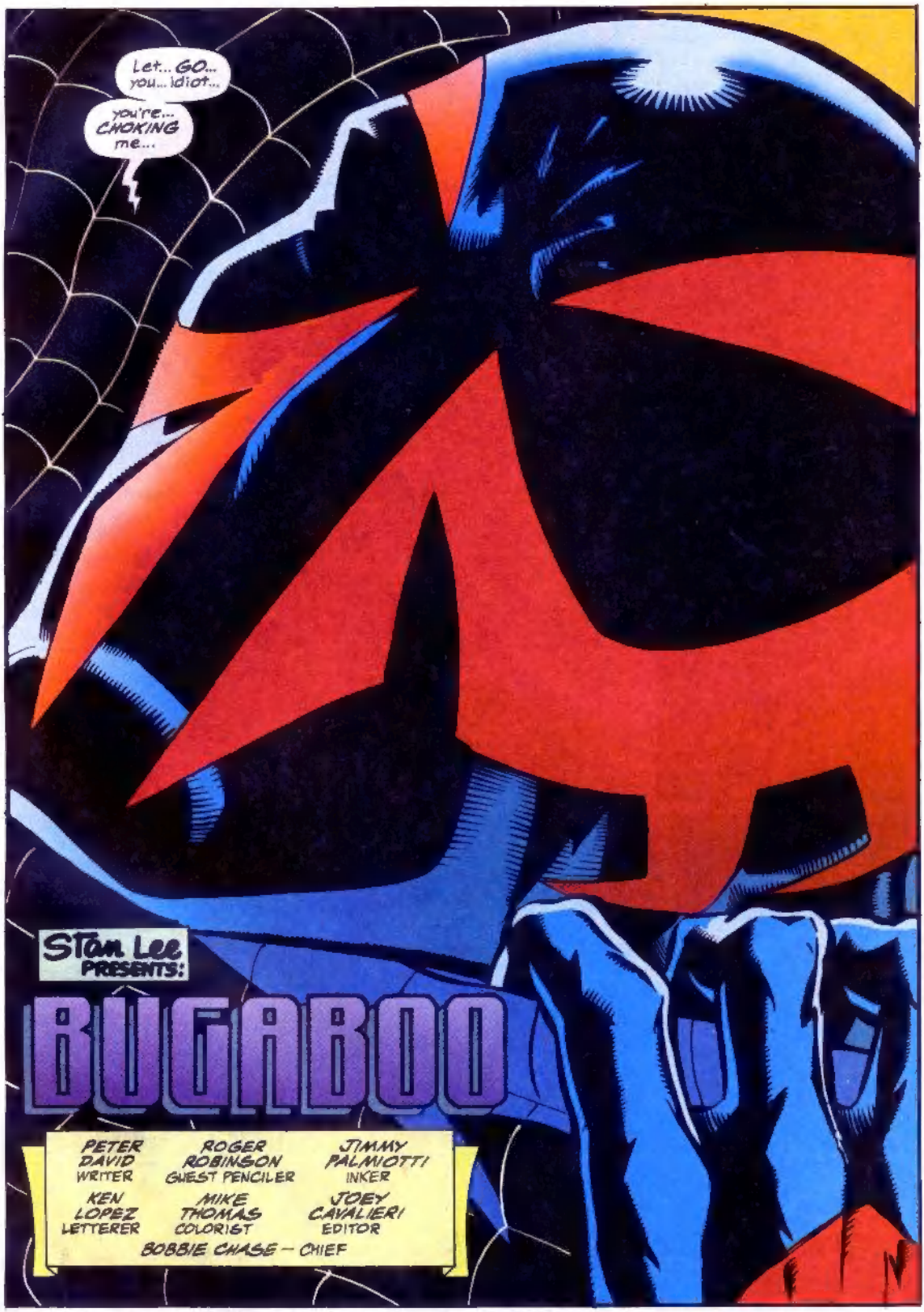

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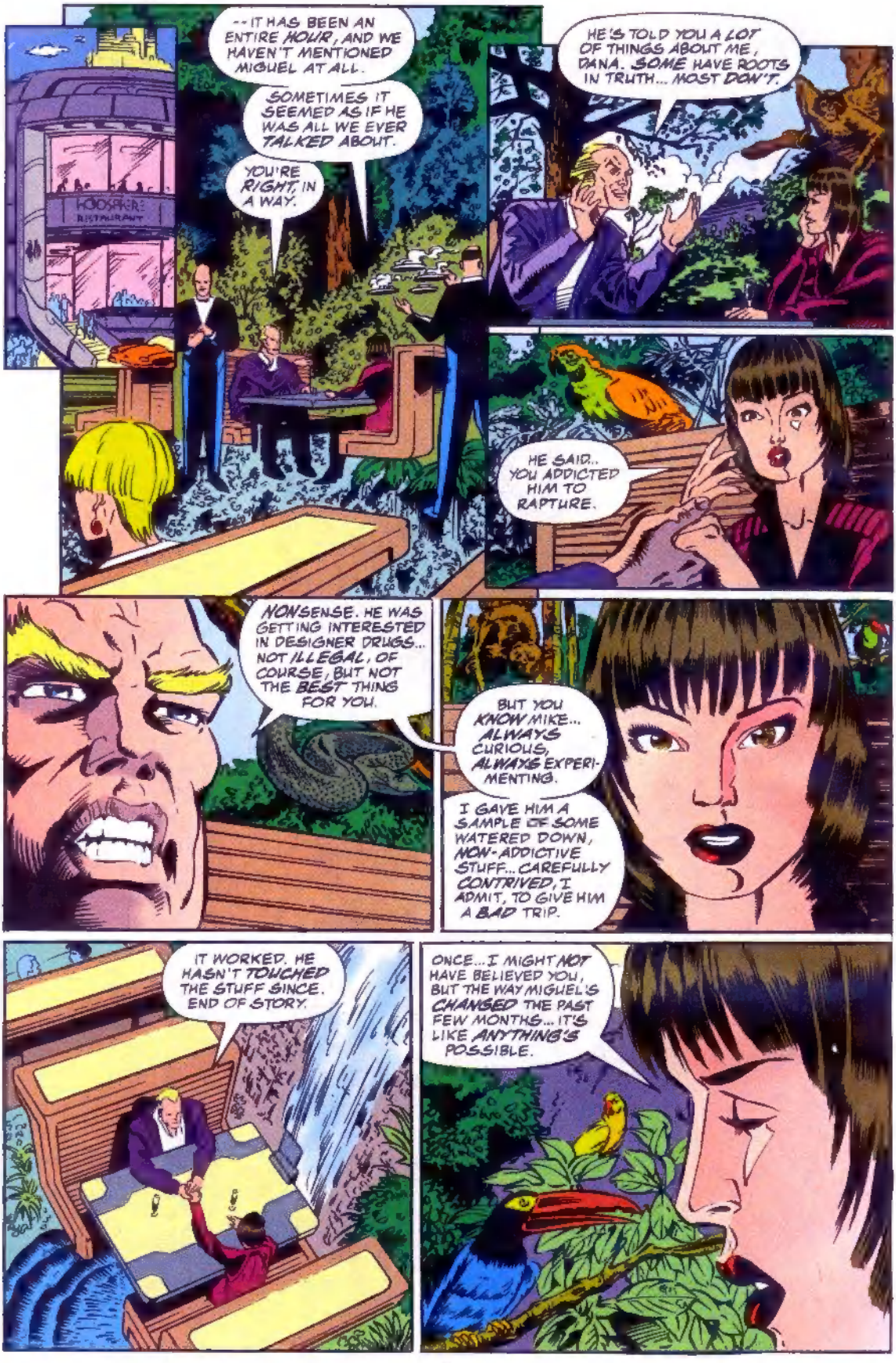
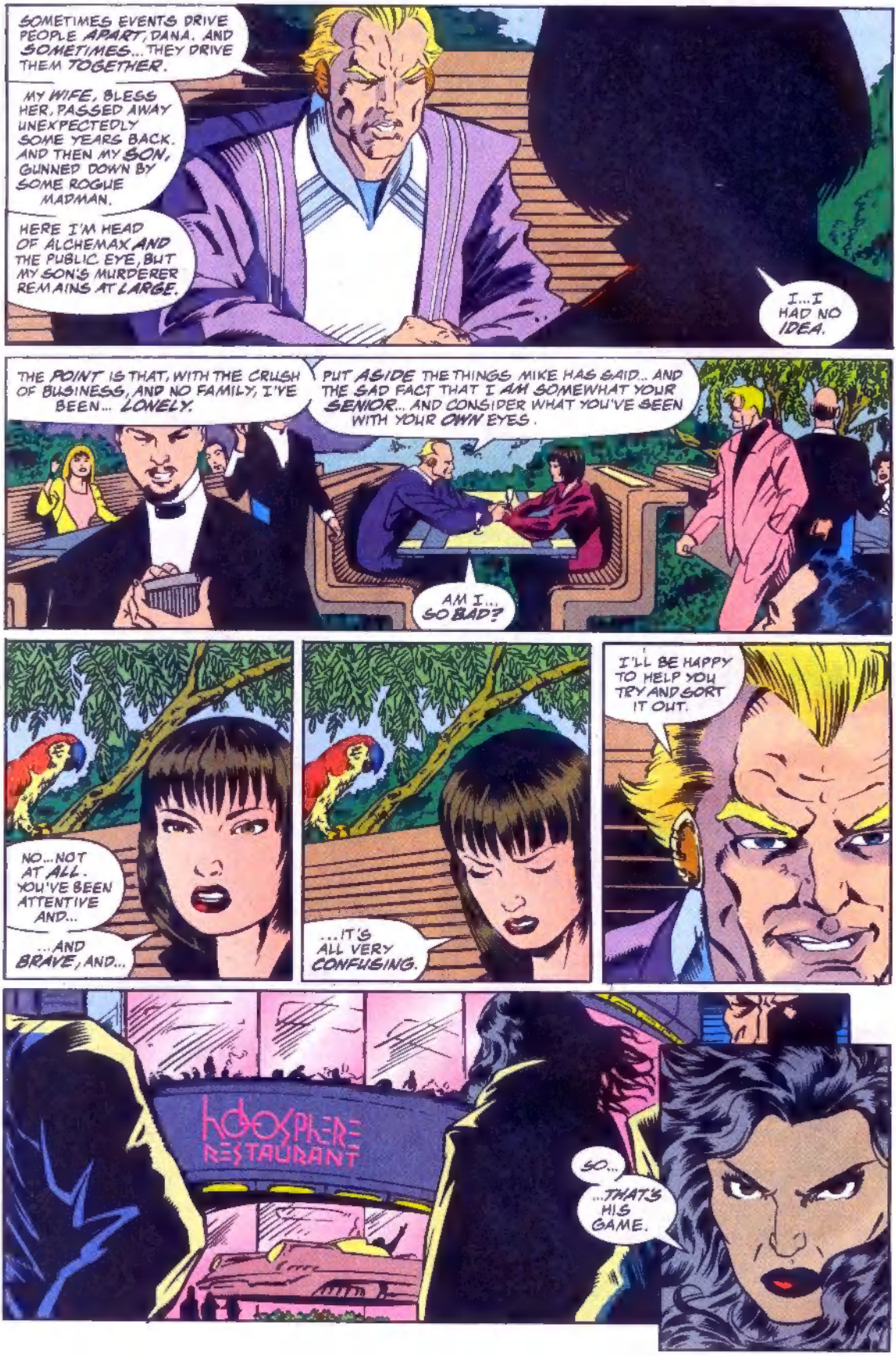
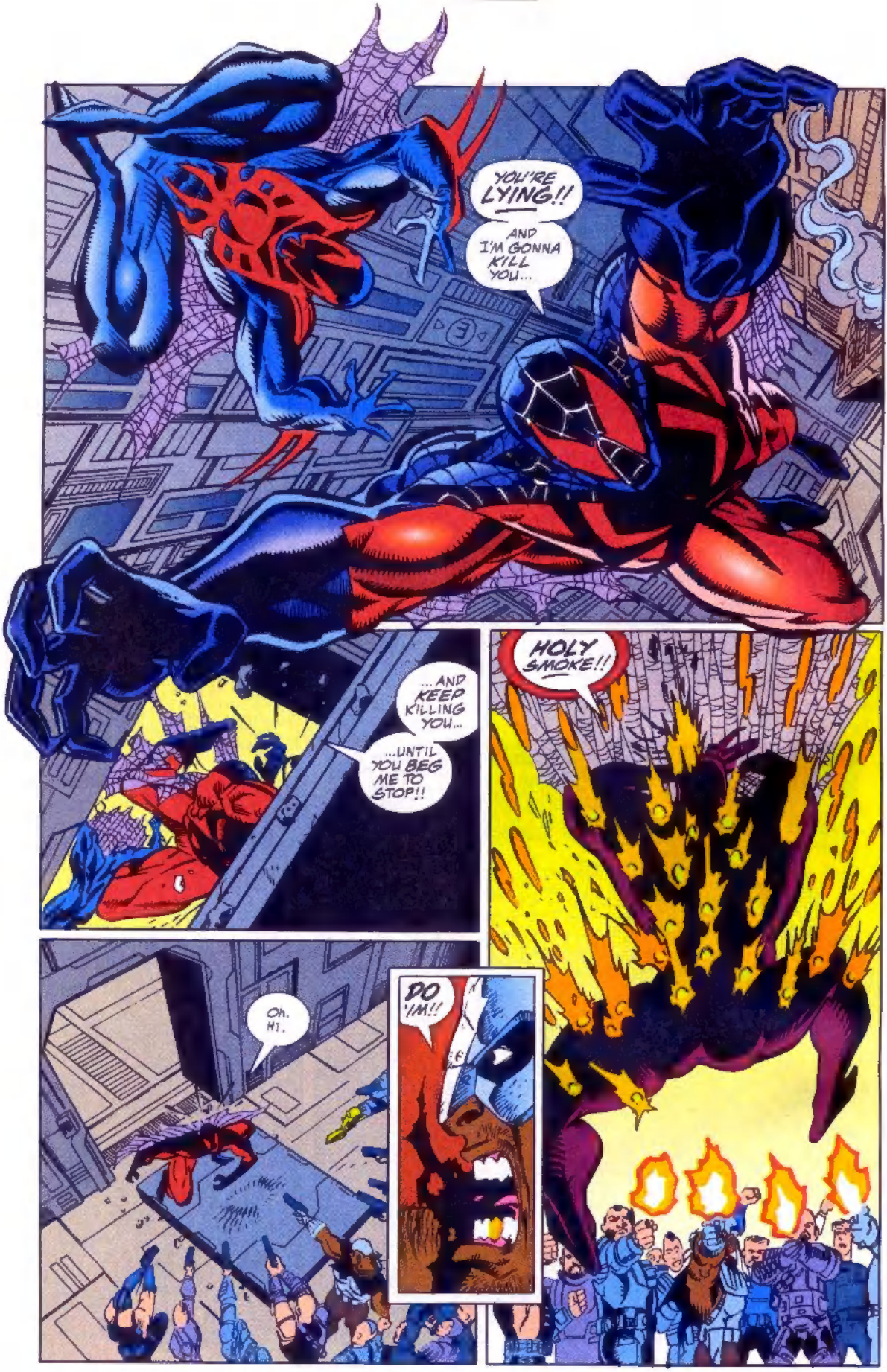
ISN'T THAT SWEET? THEY'RE BONDING!!
GET... OFF ME, YOU CYBERNETIC PSYCHO!
HUH?
YOU... YOU DON'T LIKE ME?
I, FLIPSIDE, COME INTO THIS WORLD, ACTIVATED AFTER ALL THIS TIME...
...LOOKING FOR COMPANIONSHIP... UNDERSTANDING...
...AND YOU SHUH... SHOVE ME A SOB AWAY...
HEY.. DON'T CRY... IT'S OKAY...

WHO ASKED YOU?!?
...GCCHHH...
WE WERE HAVING A GENUINE "MOMENT!" I DIDN'T NEED YOU BUTTING IN!
ANY OF YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?!
NO SIR.
NOPE.
UH UH.
HOW ABOUT... ...YOU?
OHHHH SHOCK!


--IT HAS BEEN AN ENTIRE HOUR, AND WE HAVEN'T MENTIONED MIGUEL AT ALL.
SOMETIMES IT SEEMED AS IF HE WAS ALL WE EVER TALKED ABOUT.
YOU'RE RIGHT, IN A WAY.
HOOSIER RESTAURANT
HE'S TOLD YOU A LOT OF THINGS ABOUT ME, DANA. SOME HAVE ROOTS IN TRUTH... MOST DON'T.
HE SAID... YOU ADDICTED HIM TO RAPTURE.
NONSENSE. HE WAS GETTING INTERESTED IN DESIGNER DRUGS... NOT ILLEGAL, OF COURSE, BUT NOT THE BEST THING FOR YOU.
BUT YOU KNOW MIKE... ALWAYS CURIOUS, ALWAYS EXPERIMENTING.
I GAVE HIM A SAMPLE OF SOME WATERED DOWN, NON-ADDICTIVE STUFF... CAREFULLY CONTRIVED, I ADMIT, TO GIVE HIM A BAD TRIP.
IT WORKED. HE HASN'T TOUCHED THE STUFF SINCE. END OF STORY.
ONCE... I MIGHT NOT HAVE BELIEVED YOU, BUT THE WAY MIGUEL'S CHANGED THE PAST FEW MONTHS... IT'S LIKE ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE.


SOMETIMES EVENTS DRIVE PEOPLE APART, DANA. AND SOMETIMES... THEY DRIVE THEM TOGETHER.
MY WIFE, BLESS HER, PASSED AWAY UNEXPECTEDLY SOME YEARS BACK. AND THEN MY SON, GUNNED DOWN BY SOME ROGUE MADMAN.
HERE I'M HEAD OF ALCHEMAX AND THE PUBLIC EYE, BUT MY SON'S MURDERER REMAINS AT LARGE.
I...I HAD NO IDEA.
THE POINT IS THAT, WITH THE CRUSH OF BUSINESS, AND NO FAMILY, I'VE BEEN... LONELY.
PUT ASIDE THE THINGS MIKE HAS SAID... AND THE SAD FACT THAT I AM SOMEWHAT YOUR SENIOR... AND CONSIDER WHAT YOU'VE SEEN WITH YOUR OWN EYES.
AM I... SO BAD?
NO... NOT AT ALL. YOU'VE BEEN ATTENTIVE AND...
...AND BRAVE, AND...
...IT'S ALL VERY CONFUSING.
I'LL BE HAPPY TO HELP YOU TRY AND SORT IT OUT.
HOOSPHERE RESTAURANT
SO...
...THAT'S HIS GAME.

A...GAME...
THAT...THING...CUTS DOWN SOLLY LIKE IT'S NOTHING...
...AND ACTS LIKE IT'S ALL A GAME.
WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO NEXT, SPIDEY? HUH?
TRY AND FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU ARE.
AND HOW TO SHUT YOU DOWN.
IT'S SOME SORT OF ARTIFICIAL CONSTRUCT.. A PROTOTYPE WEAPON, LEFT OVER FROM THE HEROIC AGE.
BUT IT'S SO ERRATIC... EITHER THE LOGIC CIRCUITRY DETERIORATED OVER THE YEARS...
..OR ELSE IT NEVER WORKED PROPERLY IN THE FIRST PLACE.
I THINK THERE'S A WAY TO SHUT IT DOWN... A FAILSAFE OVER-RIDE TO--
I'M STARTING TO THINK I DON'T LIKE YOU. THAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO HURT ME.
THAT'S NOT TRUE...


YOU'RE LYING!!
AND I'M GONNA KILL YOU...
...AND KEEP KILLING YOU...
...UNTIL YOU BEG ME TO STOP!!
HOLY SMOKE!!
Oh. Hi.
DO 'IM!!

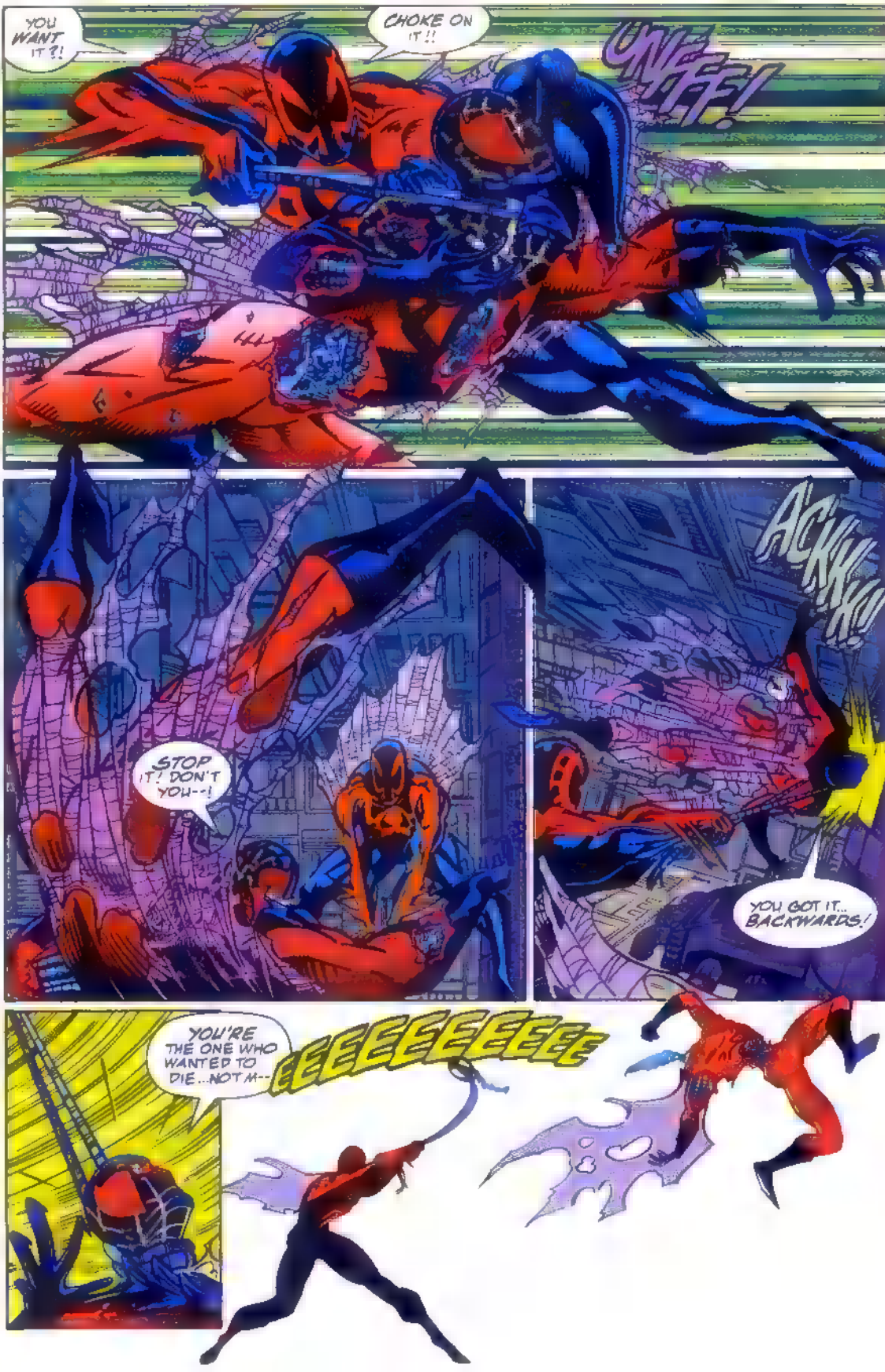
Y'GET IT?
HOLY?
SMOKE?
DON'T'CHA GET IT? IT'S A GAG! A JOKE!
WASSA MATTER?
ZWIF
CAN'T'CHA TAKE A JOKE?!?
KRAK
SPIDER-MAN! HELP US!!
YOU WANTED TO REVIVE HIM! HE'S YOUR PROBLEM, PACKRAT!

MEXICO CITY...
I'M SORRY I CAN'T AFFORD ANYPLACE NICER, KASE.
I'M AT MY CREDIT LIMIT FOR THIS LITTLE JUNKET.
I DON'T CARE, O'HARA. ANYPLACE LOOKS GREAT WITH YOU IN IT.
LOOK, KASE... THAT HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH.
OH, I DON'T THINK SO.
NO... YOU'VE GOTTA UNDERSTAND.
I... UH... YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG IMPRESSION OF...
WHATEVER IT IS...
...IT CAN WAIT.

I'M WARNING YOU--!
"WARNING" ME! YOUR PEOPLE'S CORPSES ARE STACKING LIKE CORDWOOD, AND YOU'RE "WARNING" ME?!
WHAT'S IT TAKE TA GET A REAL "THREAT?"
SHUT UP!!
SORRY, PACKRAT! WRONG ANSWER! BUT THANKS FOR PLAYIN' OUR GAME... AND HERE'S YOUR CONSOLATION PRIZE!
NO.
YOU'RE HELPING THEM?! WHY DO YOU CARE ABOUT THEM?!
I DON'T. I JUST DON'T CARE ABOUT MYSELF MUCH.
I GET IT! YOU'RE SUICIDAL!
DON'T WORRY! I CAN HELP!

ALL WE GOTTA DO IS TAKE YOUR HEAD, LIKE SO...
...PLEASE, PLEASE, HOLD THE APPLAUSE...
...SHOVE YOUR HEAD INTO THIS GAPING WOUND...
...SEAL UP THE WOUND... AND PRESTO!
SUFFOCATION ■ DECAPITATION! WHICH WILL BE FIRST!?
THE AUDIENCE IS BREATHLESS! AND SO ARE YOU!
WHAT'S THE DEAL!? WHAT'RE YOU STRUGGLING FOR?!
YOU'RE NOT ONLY SUICIDAL... YOU'RE INSINCERE?
WHAT A CRYING SHAME IT TURNED OUT THIS WAY.
YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDERSTOOD ME.
HE'S...RIGHT... HERE'S MY CHANCE TO GIVE IT UP... FINALLY...

BUT TO DIE... LIKE THIS...
-LIKE THIS!?!
HEY! KNOCK IT OFF! I...I CAN'T--
ARRRHHH!!
UNHH... GIMME THAT... ENERGY CABLE...
REROUTING POWER... TEMPORARY... BUT I NEED IT...
...BACK!!!


YOU WANT IT?!
CHOKE ON IT!!
UNFF!
STOP IT! DON'T YOU--!
ACKKKU
YOU GOT IT... BACKWARDS!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO DIE...NOT M--
EEEEEEEEEEE

YOU DID IT!!!
YOU DID IT!!!
TOO BAD I'M GONNA HAVE TO KILL YOU ANYWAY...
MOVE.
APRES VOUS.

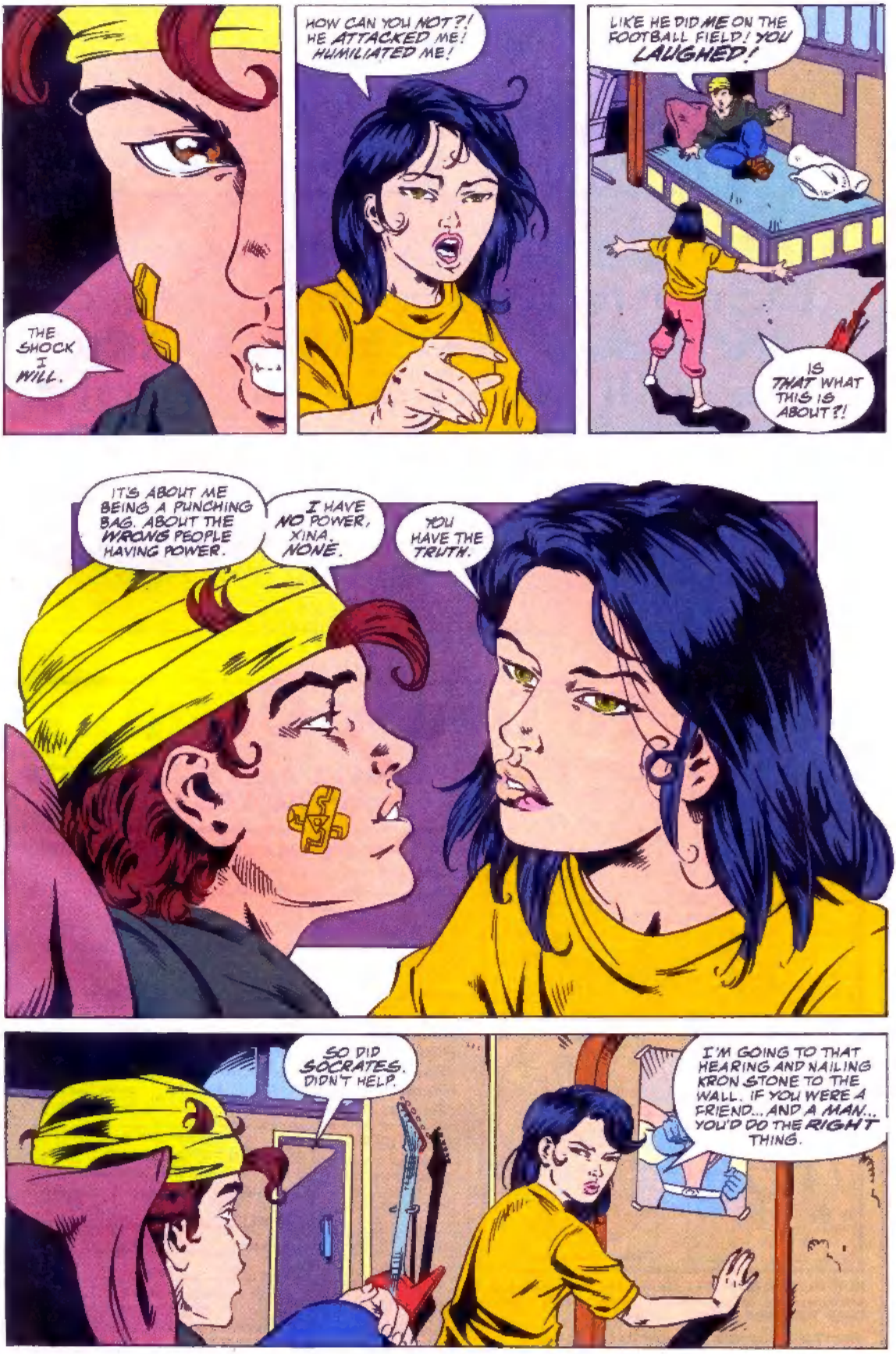
ALL RIGHT, GENTLEMEN. IT'LL JUST BE THAT MUCH MORE SPORTING WHEN WE HUNT HIM DOWN. RIGHT?
RIGHT?
ABSOLUTELY. NOTHING BEATS A CHASE.
START RUNNING.
ARRHHHH!

AW, SHOCK... NIGHTSHADE LOOKS COMPLETELY BURNED OUT.
AND I'LL BET THEY DON'T HAVE THE RESOURCES TO REBUILD...
MIGGY!!!
WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?! I WAS WORRIED SICK!
HIDING OUT. BUT WHEN I SAW PEOPLE LEAVING, I FIGURED IT WAS SAFE TO COME OUT.
OH..
BUT... YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, XINA. THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING. WHERE'S ANGELA? WH...
No. Never mind. I can see it in your face.
SPIDER-MAN WAS RIGHT THERE... AND HE COULDN'T SAVE HER. MR. BIG-SHOT HERO.
I WISH I COULD TELL HIM, RIGHT TO HIS MASK, JUST HOW OVERRATED I THINK HE IS.

SHE WORKED HER WHOLE LIFE FOR THIS, AND... WHAT WAS THE POINT? IT'S ALL A WASTE.
DON'T SAY THAT.
I'M GOING HOME, MIGGY. [redacted] COMING?
I... CAN'T. NOT NOW.
I SAID I HAD TO GET AWAY FROM THERE... FROM MY MOTHER, MY... BROTHER... I CAN'T GO BACK.
YOU WANT TO DO SOME MORE HIDING. THAT IT?
SOMETIMES I THINK HIDING IS WHAT I DO BEST.
SO... WHAT DO I SAY HERE?
"SEE YA LATER?"
I GUESS SO.
O... OKAY THEN...
SEE YA LATER.
NEXT: ROUTE 666

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
YOUNG MIGUEL O'HARA
SPLITTING
MIGUEL, WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TESTIFY AT THE HEARING THIS AFTERNOON?
PETER DAVID - WRITER
DAVID BOLLER - ARTIST
KEN LOPEZ - LETTERER
ED LAZELLARI - COLORIST
JOEY CAVALIERI - EDITOR
BOBBIE CHASE - CHIEF
WHAT HEARING?

THE BOARD HEARING! WHERE THEY'LL KICK KRON OUT OF SCHOOL!
GROW UP, XINA.
NOW LISTEN HERE, YOUNG MAN...
ANGELA? COULD I, MAYBE, TALK TO HIM? PRIVATE?
PRIVATE-LY.
VERY WELL. TALK SOME SENSE INTO HIM, IF YOU CAN.
LOOK, MIGUEL... FIRST OFF, YOU'VE GOT TO...
DON'T TELL ME WHAT I'VE "GOT TO" DO! YOU DON'T REALLY THINK THEY'LL KICK HIM OUT OF SCHOOL, DO YOU? HIS DAD IS TYLER STONE!
IF MY DAD WERE TYLER STONE, I'D BE PRETTY CONFIDENT OF STAYING PUT. IF ANYONE SHOULD GO, IT'S ME!
YOU CAN'T GO! YOU HAVE TO TESTIFY AGAINST KRON.


THE SHOCK I WILL.
HOW CAN YOU NOT?! HE ATTACKED ME! HUMILIATED ME!
LIKE HE DID ME ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD! YOU LAUGHED!
IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?!
IT'S ABOUT ME BEING A PUNCHING BAG. ABOUT THE WRONG PEOPLE HAVING POWER.
I HAVE NO POWER, XINA. NONE.
YOU HAVE THE TRUTH.
SO DID SOCRATES. DIDN'T HELP.
I'M GOING TO THAT HEARING AND NAILING KRON STONE TO THE WALL. IF YOU WERE A FRIEND... AND A MAN... YOU'D DO THE RIGHT THING.

AND IF I DO... AND HE STAYS... THEN I'M DEAD.
AND IF BY SOME MIRACLE HE GETS TOSSED, THEN I'VE GOT HIS DAD GUNNING FOR ME.
MIGUEL... I'M LEAVING YOU WITH THIS:
DO... WHAT'S... RIGHT.
BUT THAT'S OURS!
NOT ANYMORE.
YOU SURE SHOWED THEM, DAD!
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, MIGUEL!
BUT XINA SAID...
HEY, MIGUEL! HOW'S TRICKS?
X-XINA?!
YOU'VE RUINED US! WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?!

AND THAT'S WHEN YOU SHOWED UP, MISS D. IF...IF YOU HADN'T...
THANK YOU, XINA. I KNOW IT WAS VERY PAINFUL FOR YOU TO REMEMBER.
AND PAINFUL FOR ME AS WELL...HEARING MY SON'S RAMBUNCTIOUSNESS BEING DISTORTED INTO SOME SORT OF ALLEGED SEXUAL ASSAULT.
ALLEGED?!
THERE WAS A WITNESS, MR. STONE, WHO I'M SURE WILL BE HERE MOMENTARILY.
"SO LET'S JUST SIT AND WAIT FOR HIM TO ARRIVE."